

The Communities in Stockton

The Town of Stockton officially began in 1855. Malcolm Rosholt, noted Portage County Historian, eloquently relates a little of the County's and the Town's beginnings in his book "Our County Our Story".

The Yankee's were the first group of settler's to come and take up residence in Portage County. The 1850 County Census is filled with birthplaces from the east. New Hampshire, New York, Vermont, Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Canada and more. The census also shows that the immigrants began to arrive from Ireland, Nova Scotia, England, Scotland, Norway and Germany. The land was appealing and abundant. In those days it was selling at \$1.25 cents an acre. Land speculators from the east were buying numerous parcels and then selling it to the newcomer's.

Those who settled in Stockton took a very active role in establishing the town. Some of the most notable settlers were: Oliver H. Lamoreux, the town's very first Chairman and also a Justice of the Peace, William Arnott whom the community of Arnott is named after, Michael Dawson, who originally settled in Sharon but became resident of the town when the boundaries changed in 1871, Nelson Blodgett, from whom we possibly got the community name of Stockton, and Orson Fancher with whom the little community of Fancher shares its name.

Oliver H. Lamoreux was born at Clockville, town of Lenox, Madison County, New York on April 22, 1824. In 1849 he came to Wisconsin prospecting and shortly after returned to the east. He was admitted to the bar in the state of New York in 1851 and to practice in the Supreme Court of Wisconsin in 1858. It was on October 22, 1851 he again came west and settled in this county. Lamoreux help organize the Town of Stockton and became the first elected chairman of the Town Board on May 28, 1855. He resided in Stockton until January 1859 when he moved to Plover. (Source-Stevens Point Journal)

The Green Bay & Western laid tracks through the area known today as Arnott around 1872. William Arnott moved his family to Portage County from New York. The 1876 County plat shows they settled in the southern part of Stockton. Sometime before September of 1882, Arnott and several other town residents went around the area collecting money, a required \$500 and, also secured one and one half acres of land for a Station. The Station and the Post Office were named after Arnott. The little community then prospered and grew, and the name Arnott still applies. (Source-Stevens Point Daily Journal)

Michael Dawson successfully petitioned the Railroad for a Station in *Dawson*. As the story goes, the community was called Dawson, named so after the landowner Michael Dawson from Bangor, Maine. "Two prominent residents of Stockton petitioned for a station there."(Source- Stevens Point Journals 8/19&26/1876) But only one could be chosen. One article implies the Railroad named the new Station *Custer*. (Possibly named so after George Armstrong Custer who recently had been defeated in battle.) The area soon became known as Custer. Although the Station or Post Office were not named after Dawson, the Community of Custer probably survives because of his generous gifts of money and land for the station, which in turn also helped that community prosper and grow.

In the early years, Strong's Landing, also known as Berlin, Wisconsin was a busy place for those arriving. From there they would travel by stagecoach, horse & buggy or wagons to other areas of the State. Along the route primarily used by the travelers coming this way was *Stockton House*. It was owned and operated by Nelson Blodgett who came to Wisconsin in the early 1850's from Ohio. Malcolm Rosholt describes the building as a "*tavern-house*." This structure was located along what we know today as Shady Drive, a short distance southeast of the Morrill Cemetery. Since this was a primary route, a post office was also located in that same establishment named Stockton and mail came in by stagecoach or horse and rider.

Two occurrences happened that might have changed this. In 1871 the Railroad came through the area and Stockton's northern boundary was moved even farther north taking some of the town of Sharon's Sections. The trains were now delivering the mail, and possibly Stockton House could no longer be the post office because it was not along a railroad line or because of the increased distance between Stockton's boundaries. Whatever the reason, in August of 1874, about nine years after Blodgett's death, the Stockton Post Office replaced the Grant Post Office, which had been established in December 1864 near the area of the rail lines of today's community of Stockton. Whether that area was called Stockton at the time is not known, but it has been called Stockton since.

For years after the Railroads arrival to Wisconsin and Portage County, post offices were named along the lines. Orson Fancher, born in Niagara Falls, New York, came to Wisconsin with his parents about 1852. Their family settled on a farm at Lake Thomas. (Source-Stevens Point Journal) St. Mary of Mount Carmel Parish was founded in 1884 and the area around it quickly became the second largest rural settlement in the county. (Source-Michael Goc's book – Native Realm) In 1891, the Fancher farmhouse became the Fancher Post Office with Orson Fancher named as Postmaster. The surrounding area soon became known as Fancher, a named still used at times in reference to that region of Portage County.

S. S.

